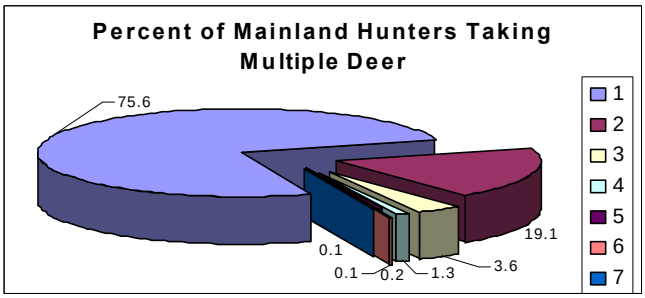
RHODE ISLAND
2004-2005 SEASON
DEER HARVEST INFORMATION

	ARCHERY		MUZZLE LOADER		SHOTGUN	
Year	Permits	Harvested	Permits	Harvested	Permits	Harvested
1977	654	62	0	0	2395	95
1978	751	78	54	0	2721	91
1979	889	93	95	1	2984	102
1980	998	72	100	4	3257	141
1981	1156	88	234	6	3783	149
1982	1158	104	251	8	3557	104
1983	1164	99	265	8	3380	115
1984	1160	109	545	14	4500	125
1985	852	112	639	24	3193	120
1986	895	126	675	63	3354	239
1987	1093	179	725	56	2567	196
1988	1627	125	1709	105	4631	218
1989	1722	169	2242	189	4571	280
1990	2089	238	3888	390	5602	311
1991	2769	291	3796	474	5362	376
1992	4088	417	4598	663	7754	382
1993	3669	378	5144	625	6520	313
1994	3951	355	5487	658	6857	383
1995	4426	415	5680	743	7130	603
1996	4110	474	5973	1114	7901	575
1997+	4058	299	7095	1044	7595	697
1998	3578	310	7863	771	6205	451
1999	3750	389	7290	1063	6999	591
2000	3868	472	7610	1107	6468	770
2001	4371	499	7769	1178	7338	572
2002	4772	525	7943	915	6249	591
2003	4612	737	7241	944	5362	563
2004	5311	783	6998	1173	5642	727

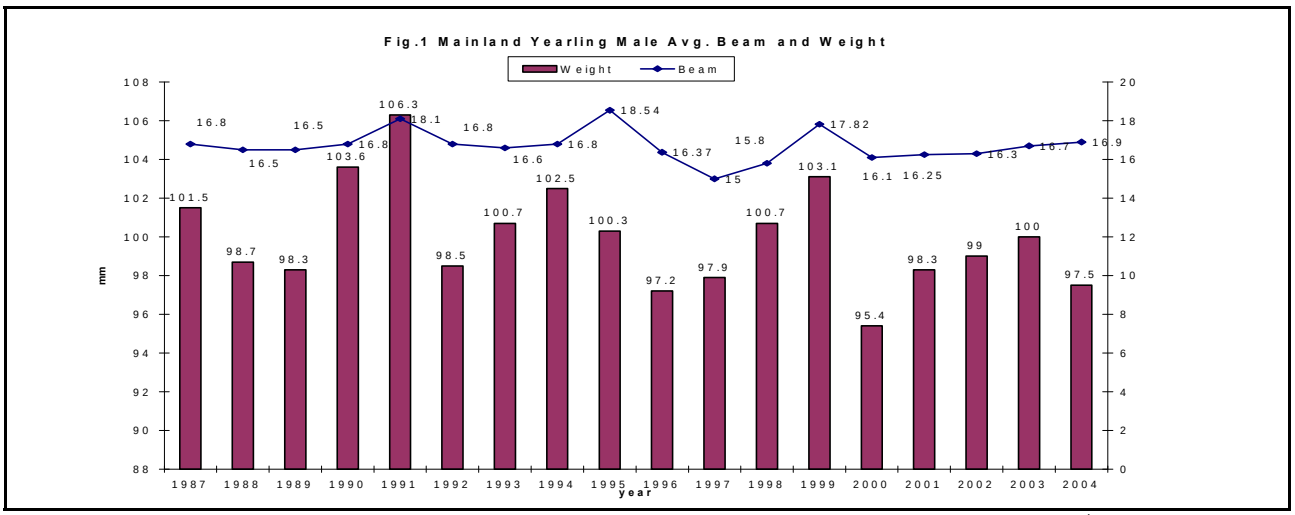
+ Beginning 1997 the harvest total includes special and Block Island seasons



During the Rhode Island 2004-05 hunting season 1,637 hunters harvested a total of 2,163 deer on the mainland, with archery, muzzle loader and shotgun permits. Most hunters took a single deer (75%, a 5% increase over the past 3 year trend.

Herd Health, Beams, Weights and Records

The annual health of the herd can be assessed using average weights and antler beam diameters of the yearlings. High average weight and beam diameters indicate a healthy habitat with abundant food and nutrition. Beams and weights displaying a downward trend indicate increased numbers or reduced quality of habitat.



2004 - 2005

LARGEST DEER TAKEN - HOG DRESSED WEIGHT

	Female/Location	Male/Pts/Location
Archery	150/N.Kingston	243/8/Exeter
Muzzle	160/ Jamestown	230/10/Glocester
Shotgun	155/Glocester	201/8/Charlestown

2004 - 2005

MAINLAND MEAN DRESSED WEIGHT

	Male (lbs.)	Female (lbs.)
Fawn	59.6	55.4
Yearling	97.5	92.8
Adult	141.6	107.5

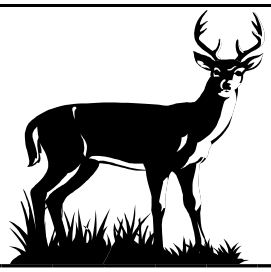
averages based on shotgun data

Harvest Ratios

Hunters tend to favor bucks over does on the mainland as shown by the 2004 season breakdown.

	Archery	Muzzleloader	Shotgun
Males	212	715	341
Females	193	458	241

Deer populations have the potential for rapid growth. Under normal circumstances, does two years or older produce twins annually, while yearling does typically produce single fawns. Removing only bucks from the population does little to change overall herd numbers, and overharvest of large males can reduce the genetic diversity of the herd. To influence herd growth, management techniques target doe harvesting. Antlerless seasons are instituted to keep herd numbers in balance with available habitat.



2004 RI Big Bucks

Archery-Richard Napolitano-Providence Co. 14 pt. Non-typical-167 5/8" gross score

Muzzleloader-Rick Lees=Providence Co.-10 pt. Typical-163 gross score.

Honorable mention-93 year old William Goodhue shot a 159 1/8" buck w/his crossbow in Washinton Co.

Photos of most of these bucks can be found at: www.bigbuckclub.com click Photo Gallery

For stories and photos on these and many more big bucks, subscribe to "Northeast Big Buck News Magazine at: NBBC, 390 Marshall St. , Paxton, MA 01612, or email jbhunts@aol.com for more information.

Management Areas, Towns and Auto

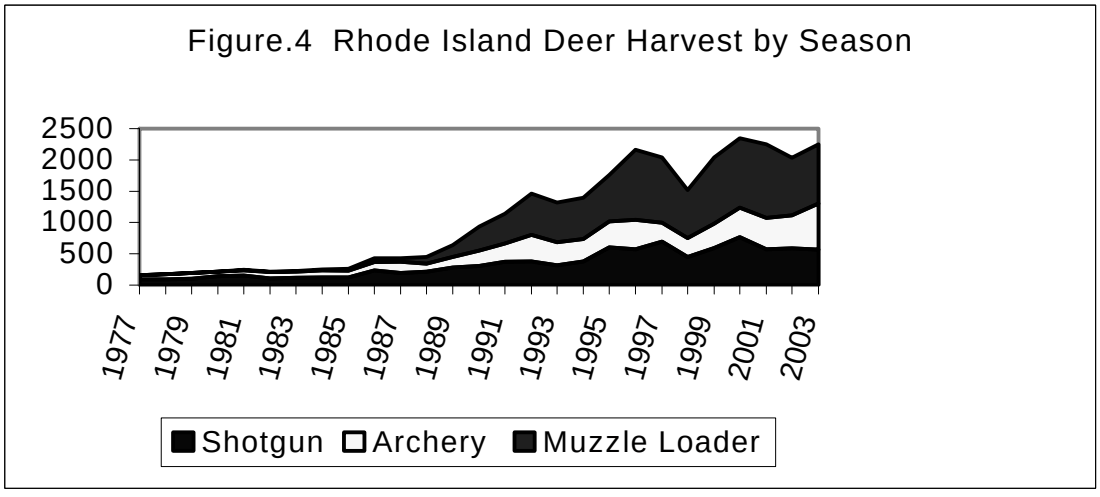
HARVEST BY MANAGEMENT AREA

Management Area	Archery	Muzzle	Shotgun
Arcadia	5	62	49
Big River	10	37	27
Black Hut	0	1	2
Buck Hill	0	8	2
Burlingame	5	8	11
Carolina	1	10	6
Cocumscussoc	2	1	0
Durfee Hill	2	8	7
George Washington	2	7	5
Great Swamp	4	14	9
J.L Curran	0	0	3
Killingly	1	3	1
Nicholas Farm	2	11	3
Prudence/Patience*	233	-	12
Rockville	0	2	1
Round Top	0	0	0
8 Rod Farm	0	1	0
South Shore	0	2	0
Wickaboxet	3	2	1
Woody Hill	0	5	2
Washington Grove	0	1	2
Total Mgt. Area	**270**	**183**	**143**
Other (town owned)		7	
NW Coop**	0	5	0
Private	506	983	583
Unknown	8	8	0
Carter	2	-	-
TOTAL	**786**	**1186**	**726**

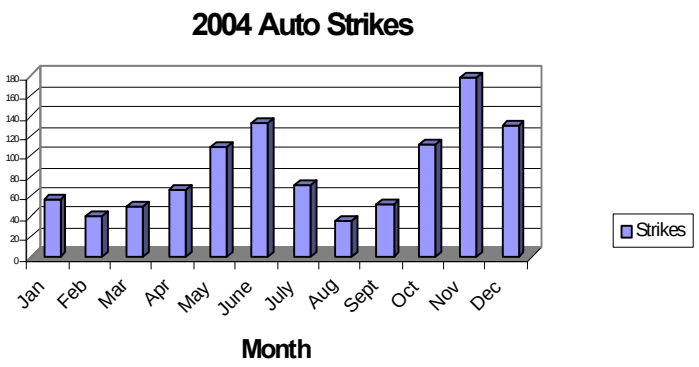
HARVEST BY TOWN

Town	Archery	Muzzle	Shotgun
Block Island	30	--	133
Burillville	10	77	27
Charlestown	28	45	45
Coventry	33	83	33
Cranston	3	6	11
E. Greenwich	6	7	0
Exeter	45	152	120
Foster	17	132	38
Glocester	24	129	44
Hopkinton	13	65	36
Jamestown	28	12	4
Johnston	3	6	4
Little Compton	8	22	0
Middletown	1	0	0
Newport	1	0	0
N. Kingstown	37	27	16
N. Smithfield	8	15	5
Narragansett	5	1	0
Ports./Prud.*	352	0	12
Richmond	28	63	41
S. Kingstown	26	71	46
Scituate	18	74	21
Smithfield	5	30	7
Tiverton	24	25	6
Warren		1	
W. Greenwich	26	92	55
Westerly	6	32	22
Unknown	1	2	0
TOTAL	**786**	**1186**	**726**

* Limited to archery and special paraplegic shotgun season
** Special permit only



Non-Seasonal Mortality



Deer overabundance often leads to a high frequency of deer/ vehicle collisions, as well as excessive damage to commercial forests, agricultural crops, nursery stock and landscape plantings.

The long cold winter , spoarce mast, and stormy spring increased in the number of auto strikes and the amount of deer damage. Non-seasonal mortalities for 2004 was a record 1144 deer. Auto strikes increased 6% from 2003, totaling 1032 and were responsible for 90% of the non-seasonal take for the year. Deer strikes tend to be higher during years of poor mast because deer are more likely to travel in search of food. Other non-seasonal deaths include: dogs, poaching, deer damage, and natural accidents..

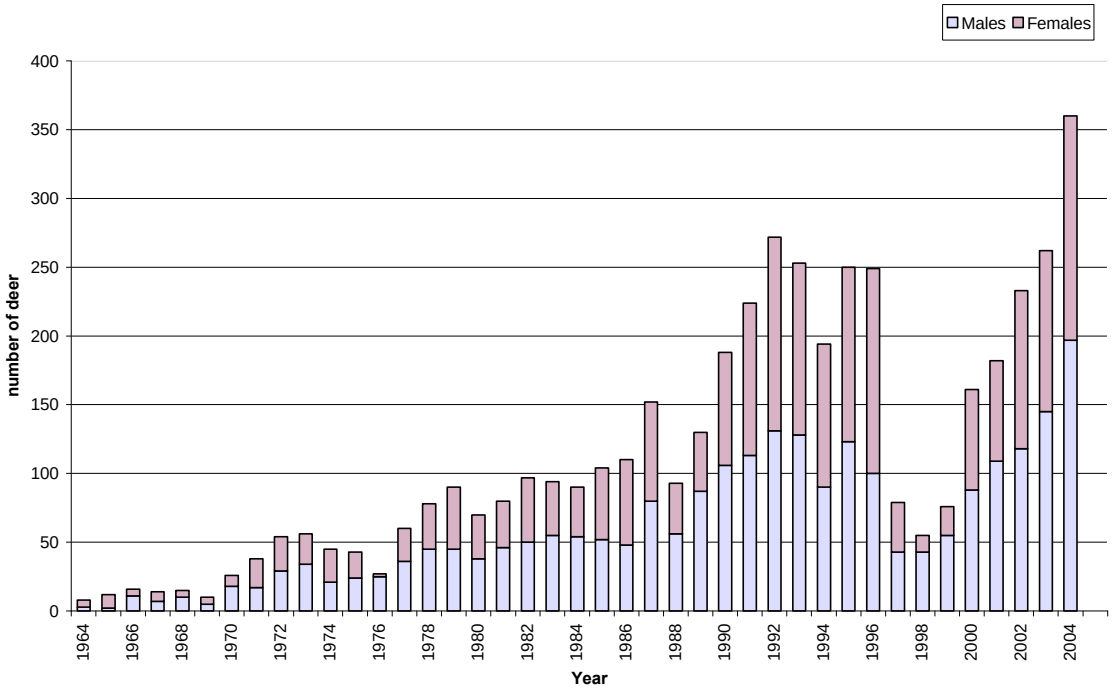
Auto Kill by Town

Kent County	
Coventry	51
East Greenwich	44
W. Greenwich	36
W. Warwick	10
Warwick	51
Providence County	
Burrillville	19
Central Falls	0
Cranston	31
Cumberland	24
E. Providence	7
Foster	39
Glocester	39
Johnston	32
Lincoln	42
N. Providence	8
N. Smithfield	24
Pawtucket	0
Providence	8
Scituate	39
Smithfield	31
Woonsocket	2
Unknown	4
Washington County	
Charlestown	50
Exeter	56
Hopkinton	37
N. Kingstown	83
Narragansett	31
Richmond	38
S. Kingstown	75
Westerly	25
New Shoreham	4
Bristol	
Bristol	4
Barrington	4
Warren	1
Newport County	
Jamestown	18
Little Compton	13
Middletown	4
Newport	0
Portsmouth	24
Prudence	6
Tiverton	**26**
Total	**1032**

Prudence Island Deer Information

Prudence Island has had one of the most concentrated white-tailed deer herds. Located in Narragansett Bay, Prudence Island, a part of the town of Portsmouth, has undergone many changes, both in terms of land use and deer population. Prudence Island was heavily farmed in the 1600's, bringing about deforestation and elimination of the deer herd. Laws to protect the deer followed soon thereafter. It was not until the early 1900's and the advent of the Industrial Revolution, that farms were abandoned and the Island reverted to forest. The deer herd rebounded, with additional recruitment from deer which swam across from the mainland. The land, again, underwent serious changes when the US Navy occupied the southern portion of the Island and stripped off the topsoil to reinforce bunkers and make roadways. By the late 1970's, deer population reached levels that exceeded the limited amount of habitat for the 5.5 square mile island, and the deer began to die of starvation. The Division of Fish and Wildlife was asked to assist the Island in developing a management plan to control the deer population. Restrictions against deer hunting were replaced with a bow hunting season, with increasing expanded quotas until 1996. A perception of low population numbers halted the high harvests in the late 90's and the population quickly rebounded. The Division responded by again increasing the quota, permitting 3 deer per hunter (1 antlered & 2 antlerless) resulting in a record 360 deer taken this season. Concerns about Lyme disease and habitat damage prompted the opening of the Heritage tract for limited deer hunting. Management needs to be focused on maintaining the hunter effort level to continue to reduce the population. Additionally, the division will continue to maintain openings utilizing brush cutting on the state management areas, as well as prescribed burning to improve the habitat and recycle nutrients into the soil.

Fig. 5. Archery Deer Take on Prudence Island

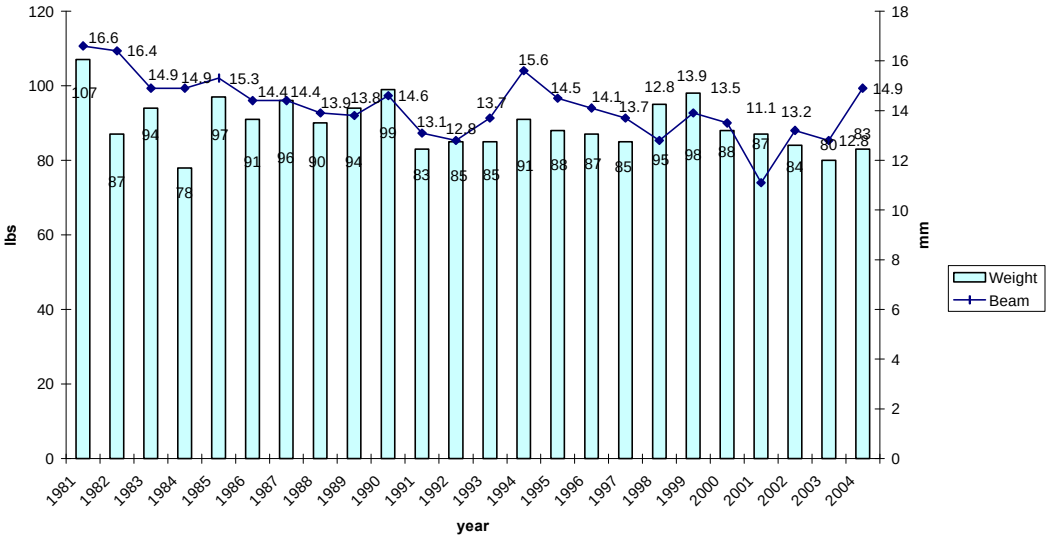


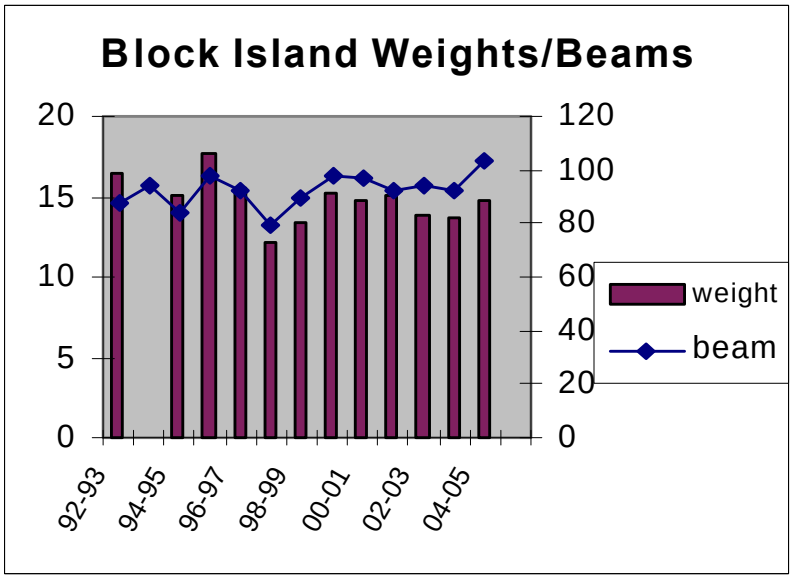
Beams & Weights

Yearling antler beam diameters are the standards by which we measure deer health. Combined with the information that we have collected on dressed weights, these give us a good indication of the annual health of the herd. In addition, the division utilizes data collected from spotlight counts, harvest record cards and school bus route count to further refine our population model.

Referring to the data on the previous page on the health of the deer, harvest objectives were set to control the size of the herd. As you can see in the chart below, the harvest was about the same for many years, but the herd was still growing, as evidenced by the decline in their health. The Division responded by increasing the harvest and allowing hunters to take a second deer. Bi-annual spotlight counts and health statistics indicated that the herd was still over carrying capacity, prompting the decision to continue the large harvest. Last year, the spotlight count increased in May and above the long term average in October. The harvest quota was increased to accommodate for the growth in the deer herd.

Figure 2. Prudence Island Yearling Male Average Beam and Weight





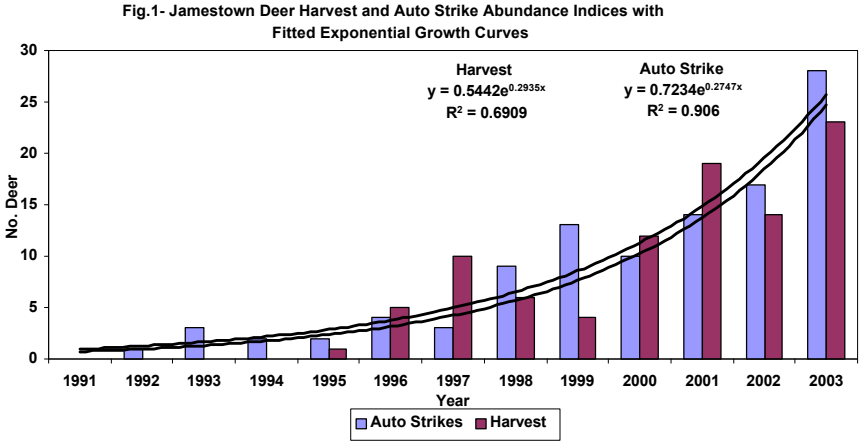
Beam measurements for yearling in 1993 were unavailable.

Block Island

Deer were imported to Block Island in 1967 at the request of the town council at the time. The deer population continued to grow resulting in numerous complaints of deer damage as predators are lacking on the island and hunting was never permitted. Complaints were addressed through deer damage permits and the herd grew to 700 by 1994. In 1996 regulated season was initiated and a referendum was passed to drastically reduce deer herd. Residents are additionally concerned about lyme disease, but are equally concerned about public safety as a result hunting has been restricted to a small portion of the island. Also harvest limits were liberalized to increase the take and the population has been reduced to approximately 250 deer. Further reductions are hampered by limited access to open space. Health parameters as measured by weights and mean yearling antler beams are still low despite the reduction of the herd.

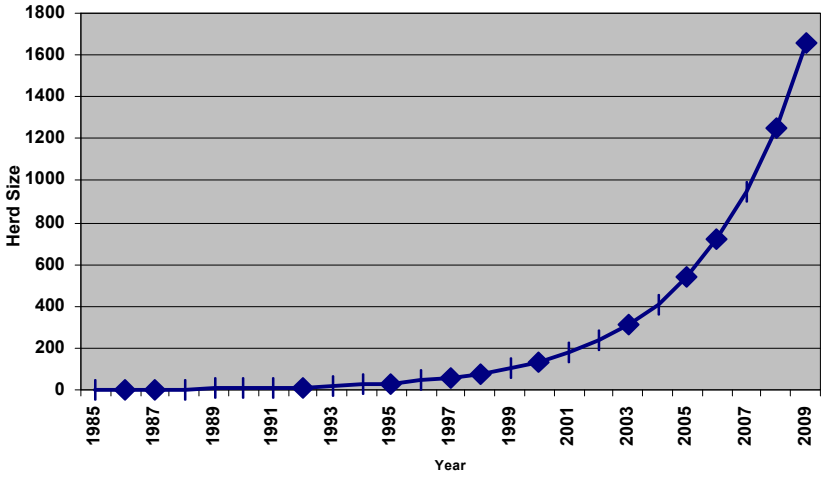
Jamestown

The Deer Harvest Information Sheet has been expanded this year to include data from Conanicut Island, aka Jamestown. The presence of deer on Jamestown is actually relatively new, establishing itself as a breeding population in about 1985. Initially, the population was seen as somewhat novel, with some concern about Lyme disease. Without any foundation of hunting on the Island**,** little in the way of damage, the population was permitted to grow, relatively unchecked. However, in keeping with the deer's natural reproductive capability, the herd quickly expanded, as depicted in Fig. 1, below. Of increasing concern is the number of auto strikes which exceeds legal harvest during the last two years.



At the current exponential rate of growth, the Island herd will double in the next two or three years.(Fig. 2 , below.) In order to begin to reduce the deer population size, 30-40% of the females need to be harvested in subsequent seasons. This approximates to a harvest of 100 animals.

Fig. 2 Projected Jamestown Deer Population From a 1985 Starting Population of Two and a 0.28 Exponential Growth Rate Computed from Harvest and Auto Strike Data



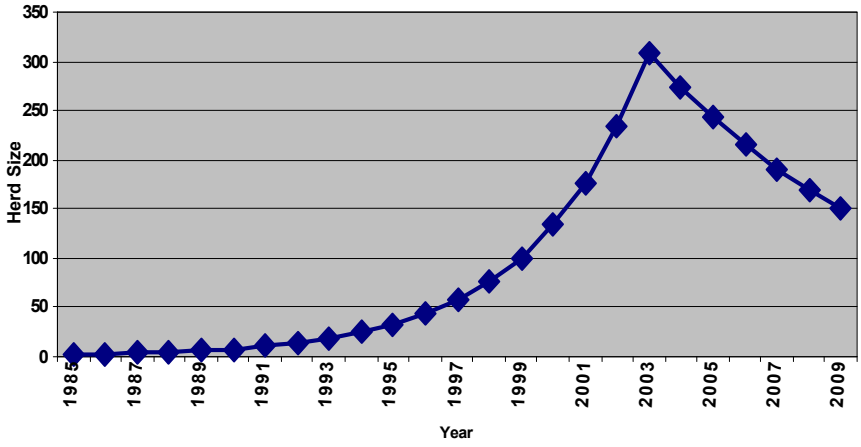


Fig. 3 Projected Jamestown Deer Population with a Simulated Harvest (removal rate) of .0.4.